

BACK LANDS

AND

THEIR INHABITANTS.

BY

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CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR OF GLASGOW.

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THIS Paper is respectfully inscribed to Dr. J. B. RUSSELL, late Medical Officer of Health for Glasgow, whose luminous lectures upon kindred subjects, and brilliant Health administration in the City, have served as inspiration to his humble admirer and friend,

PETER FYFE.

24th April, 1901.

BACK LANDS AND THEIR INHABITANTS.

BACK LANDS!—ominous words, full of deep meaning to the sanitarian—are in all large cities too often synonymous with darkness, decay, death.

The words “back lands” are a parting legacy left to the citizens of Glasgow by her late Medical Officer of Health, Dr. J. B. Russell. Before leaving us he indicated very clearly that the future improvement of our city lay in the removal of many back lands, which, in this twentieth century, still remain to darken and curse our civic life.

I have ventured to address your Association* upon this all-important subject, because I believe it is the question of the hour, and to prepare your minds for the inevitable condemnation which must sooner or later fall on those relics of past private greed and public neglect. The position of the house factor relative to insanitary blocks of such dwellings is quite well understood. He is the administrator for somebody else—the real owner—and his duty is one of the most difficult it is possible to conceive. For although a factor, as such, must leave no stone unturned to so administer as to return a reasonable interest to his employer, he is, as a man—as a private individual—I have good reason to believe, quite sensible of the assimilating influence upon his back-land tenants of dark and dismal habitations. There are few house factors in Glasgow to-day who, in the dual capacity of manager and private man, will defend back-land properties, and maintain that they are for the people the right homes in the right places.

As managers, partly responsible for the housing of the poorer class of tenants, what are your arguments for their continued existence? Are they not these?—

First.—They are there, permitted by former law and former authorities, and as such their owners have vested rights not to be lightly interfered with;

* The Association of House Factors and Property Agents in Glasgow.

Second.—They serve a certain class of the population which, on economic or social grounds, could not be equally served in front lands; and

Third.—If they were destroyed, there are no houses in the city or its suburbs of equal size and rents in which their inhabitants could reside.

Let us consider these positions one by one.

First.—*They are there, permitted by former law and former authorities, and as such their owners have vested rights not to be lightly interfered with.*

This argument is one which, in a special degree, has been recognised by Parliament in all Acts dealing with the closing and demolition of what are termed in the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890, “Obstructive Buildings.” Of course, all “back lands” or buildings occupied as dwelling-houses, and situated behind another land or building facing the street, are not “obstructive buildings.” Many “back lands” are quite sanitary, and have around them plenty of air-space for ventilation and access of light; plenty of ground space for ashpits and other conveniences. No argument is needed to support their continuance in all time coming as suitable dwellings. The argument is only required when (1) they are so placed that the back land “stops ventilation, or otherwise makes, or conduces to make, such other buildings (as the front land) to be in a condition unfit for human habitation, or dangerous or injurious to health;” or (2) “if they prevent proper measures from being carried into effect for remedying any nuisance injurious to health or other evils complained of in respect of such other buildings.”

In the latter case the owner may say, “Well, I know nothing of the law, and little about the sanitary necessities of the case; all I know is that the building of this back land has been allowed by some constituted authority, that it was a rent-producing subject, and, in good faith, I invested money in it. Am I now to lose my investment because it does not conform to modern requirements?” The law says—“Yes; you must lose your investment if it can be proved against the

property that it is an 'obstructive building' in the sense of either of the above conditions." But, notice, one of these conditions must be established by proof, and if the Local Authority are satisfied by the proof set before them, and order the demolition of the obstructive building, the owner, by giving notice within one month, may appeal to the "Superior Court," which, by Section 93 of the 1890 Act, means the "Supreme Court," which means in Scotland the Court of Session. If the owner's argument fails to convince that Court that his property is not an "obstructive building," then it must be demolished.

At this stage of the proceedings a new set of conditions arise. The argument now carries the owner of the obstructive building into certain rights of compensation. His vested rights entitle him to claim—*first*, compensation for the site; *second*, compensation for the building, based on its "fair market value as a rent-producing subject." These are questions which, if not settled amicably between the Local Authority and the owner, become the subjects of protracted and expensive debate before an arbitrator appointed by the Local Government Board. In this arbitration there are three platforms for debate—*first*, whether the rents have been enhanced by overcrowding or other illegal use of the dwellings; *second*, whether the dwellings are insanitary in themselves, or not in reasonable repair; and *third*, whether the building or any part of it is unfit for human habitation, and is not able to be made so fit.

If none of these things can be proved against it, then full compensation on rental must be paid for it, no allowance being made for compulsory purchase.

If the first can be proved, then the arbitrator may reduce the basis upon which compensation has to be fixed, viz., the rentals. If the second can be made good against it, he can deduct from the value the estimated expense of putting the property into "reasonably good repair." If the third, then only the site and the value of the materials of the buildings, or part thereof, can be claimed by the owner.

You see, therefore, that the law hedges an owner round with good weapons of defence, provided the owner is a man or woman who can afford to pay for them. In any case, it always allows him to petition to the Local Government Board within two months after the order of the Board sanctioning any scheme of demolition, in which case confirmation of the order is stopped, and the case must go before Parliament itself for final confirmation.

I think these facts should stop complaints that the law applicable to the taking away of obstructive back lands leaves owners too much at the mercy of Local Authorities. It seems to me to be the other way about, and that a Local Authority must at every stage prove its case against an obstructive back building up to the very hilt, and, after it has done so, it must acquire a site which probably it can't use for its own purposes, unless, of course, the back building belongs to the same proprietor who owns the front one, in which case the proprietor retains the site, and gets compensation for his back land, in terms of Section 41 of the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890.

There are three sets of conditions which lay a "back land" open to attack under the 38th Section of the Housing of the Working Classes Act:—

- (1) It stops ventilation ;
- (2) It *otherwise* makes, or conduces to make, some other building unfit for human habitation ; or
- (3) It prevents any nuisance injurious to health, or other evils complained of in respect of some other building, from being properly removed or remedied.

Now these terms are general in their character, and leave ample room for difference of opinion and debate. What is meant by "stopping ventilation" ? When is a building unfit for human habitation ? and under what circumstances can it, with good reason, be urged that contiguity absolutely prevents the removal of nuisance ?

A representation against an obstructive building under any of the above three counts may be made to the Local Authority (*a*) by the Medical Officer of Health, or (*b*) by any four or more inhabitant householders in the district. This is all that is necessary to set the law in motion. But a long and tortuous path now lies in front of the parties if they cannot agree. This is due to the very general and hazy terms of the section. It becomes a fight between adverse opinions, and affords a splendid field for the exhibition of human controversy and the mental gymnastics of that invaluable creature known as "the expert witness."

Our legal friends and the "experts" are surely the only parties who can sincerely rejoice in the evident inability of Parliament to put down in statute law what it really means. "If it stops ventilation:" what does that mean? So far as human health is concerned, every house should be able, by the opening of its windows and doors, to be filled with fresh respirable air. Now, there is no house in any city which has a fireplace and doors and windows in relatively suitable positions which cannot be ventilated, and ventilated well, should a fire be burning in the grate. The ventilation of any house does not quite depend upon openness of situation. The word "ventilation" is quite a misnomer here. It ought to read—"If it stops, or tends to stop, a reasonably free circulation of air in and *around* such building." You will notice the one condition is quite different from the other. The perfect ventilation of mines and tunnels at once occurs to any one in this connection; but while these and other enclosed or submerged spaces can, by simple constructional devices and appliances, be adequately ventilated, they cannot have a "circulation of air" around them. Now, it is this circumambient space in which the air may have free play that is one of the important desiderata in connection with dwelling-houses—important, not because any individual house only eight or ten feet from its neighbour across the court cannot be quite well ventilated, but because the almost equally valuable and essential condition of free daylight is not available for its inhabitants.

The value of daylight as a sanitary agent is quite well understood and admitted, and yet the Act in this part is quite silent upon it, and emphasises "ventilation" of a building, which has no absolutely necessary connection with a too close proximity of one building to another. In its second part, it is true, the words "or otherwise makes or conduces to make such other building to be in a condition unfit for human habitation, or dangerous or injurious to health," are employed as an alternative condition; but I am strongly of opinion that if fairly good ventilation can be proved to be obtained for each house in a building, and no nuisance can be alleged to exist within or immediately without it, the question of want of sufficient light alone would not, under this part of the Act, be considered sufficient to condemn the building as an "obstructive building." The section in this part is therefore weak, and should be amended.

I think that you will agree that any building so near to another as to prevent access of a reasonable amount of daylight to the dwellings it contains, is not a building fit for human occupation, and must prove in the long run dangerous to the health of its inmates, especially to those who are very young.

Assuming this, let us consider the question—"What is a 'reasonable amount of daylight' for any dwelling-house?" The theoretical amount is, of course, that which gives a sight of the sky from every part of a house at its floor level directly opposite the window. This means that every part of the floor of any house in front of its window receives direct illumination from the sky. Diagram I. exhibits what this

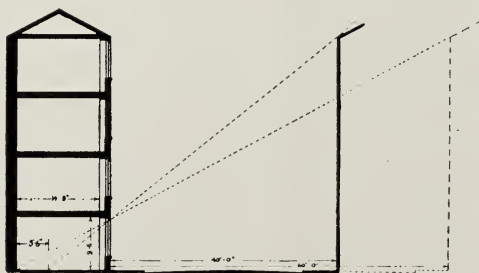


DIAGRAM I.

means in practice. Here you have a four-storey building such as the Corporation erected for working people at 45 St. James' Road. The single apartment houses on the ground floor are 14 feet 9 inches in length from wall to wall inside. In order that the rays of light from the sky should impinge upon every part of the floor opposite the windows looking out on to the street, the block of buildings on the opposite side, 40 feet in height, should not be nearer than 60 feet. As matter of fact, the street is only 40 feet wide, so that 5 feet 6 inches of the floors of the ground flat dwellings get no direct skylight, and therefore do not come up to our theory.

Leaving theory, we have now to consider the legal standard. It is that in front of every window there shall be a free space of not less than three-fourths of the height of the wall of the building in which the window is situated. That is to say, that for a four-flatted building 40 feet in height to the eaves, the free space shall not be less than 30 feet.

Diagram II. shows you a 40-foot building on each side of a 30-foot street. From this it will be seen that on the floor

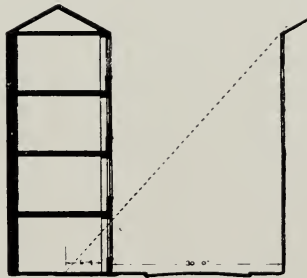


DIAGRAM II.

level sight of the sky is lost 6 feet 4 inches from the window, and the remainder is left to be illuminated by diffused light.

This, then, is the standard of the Glasgow Police Act, 1866, and surely it is fair to assume that all dwellings which do not conform to this law, made 35 years ago, are not in this year, 1901, adequately lighted, and consequently should be

placed in the category of houses which are "obstructed" themselves, or are, in turn, portion of an "obstructive building" in relation to the building opposite to them. This principle has been recognised by Parliament in the 40th Section of the Glasgow Building Regulations Act, 1900, by which, in two years, all dwelling-houses so situated may be absolutely closed from human habitation.

Leaving theory and law, we may now for a moment consider the matter from a purely practical standpoint—that is, from the standpoint which you, as representing proprietors' interests, may be supposed to consider it. In what I am now about to say I assume you will not be willing to admit that direct skylight across the whole floor of a dwelling is necessary, nor that every house is too dark which is within the three-fourths free space already alluded to. I ask you, therefore, when is a dwelling-house too dark to be healthy or fit for human habitation? and, mark, the question must be answered in relation not to a fine summer day, but in relation to the ordinary winter day in our latitude. Is it not when an ordinary person on an ordinary winter day cannot see to read the type of, say, a newspaper with reasonable facility in every open part of the house? Many a back-land house I have gone into in the city where, in the inner side by the ingle-neuk, the eyes can neither see to read nor sew, and the inevitable oil lamp on a normal winter day has to be kept alight. There are many of such houses we would have closed long ago had we been convinced that the poor persons who inhabit them could find, within the city, sanitary dwellings at rents within their means. It is a test which may be applied by any one, and, so far as I am concerned, will be applied in every case, whatever be the distance between the walls of a front and back land. Where light cannot enter in sufficient amount to permit of a tenant fairly distinguishing even the dirt and dust in every open part of the apartment, the apartment should be closed, as filth in such places is encouraged, and the air-space surrounding it is certain to be inadequate.



PHOTO. A.

This shows a range of two-storey back lands behind four-storey properties facing a front main street in the city.

The distance between them is about 21 feet. The ground-flat houses in these back lands are dark, and the ashpits are situated too close to the dwellings.

The second condition, which lays a building or house open to attack under the 1890 Act—viz., “it otherwise makes or conduces to make some other building unfit for human habitation”—points to the want of space upon which an ashpit may be sanitarily situated. The Glasgow Building Regulations Act, 1892, lays it down that every ashpit must be erected not less than 12 feet from the wall of any dwelling-house. This assumes that no court between buildings of any height could be permitted of less width than 30 feet, as an ashpit of reasonable dimensions must be 7 feet 6 inches broad over all. This is a reasonable provision, and serves to show how, in sanitation, one provision carries with it other hygienic necessities which are not mentioned or even indicated in the section itself. The old model bye-laws of the English Local Government Board put the minimum distance of an ashpit at 6 feet. It is difficult to see how any house could be sweet and healthy whose window was but a couple of yards from a pit into which all the tenants in a building were pouring their waste products, and out of which, weekly, these products were shot by the scavenger on to the court to temporarily pollute the whole of the immediately contiguous houses. But even assuming that such a minimum standard were adopted in judging as to whether any back land was too near a front land to allow of healthy conditions, the very shortest distance, taking this view alone, would be 20 feet; so that, on this basis, any back land less than 20 feet from the one in front of it would stand condemned.* I am meantime inclined to

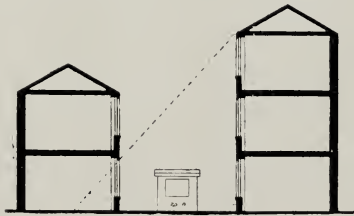


DIAGRAM III.

* See Diagram No. III.

recommend the adoption of this low standard, and advocate the sweeping away of all back lands in the city which, being behind a building of more than two storeys in height, are not further removed therefrom than 20 feet, vested rights notwithstanding. Any greater contiguity must mean what is conveyed in Part 3 of the Act, viz., "that it prevents any nuisance injurious to health from being properly removed or remedied."

I shall now enter upon a consideration of the second argument, viz., "*They (back lands) serve a certain class of the population which, on economic or social grounds, could not be equally served in front lands.*"

This, of course, presupposes two things—(1) that the occupiers of the back lands are, as matter of fact, on a distinctly lower plane socially than their front-land neighbours; and (2) that the rents charged for the back-land houses are materially lower than those for similar houses in the lands or properties facing the street.

In order to discover certain facts which might help to differentiate as between the two classes of tenants, I requested the female inspectors, who are so intimately acquainted with them and their houses, to ascertain the following in one and two-apartment houses:—

TABLE I.—SHOWING PARTICULARS CONCERNING 5,508 ONE AND TWO-APARTMENT TICKETED HOUSES IN GLASGOW.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	Total Number of Houses.	Average Rent per Month.	Average Cubic Space.	Average Earnings of Head of House.	Average Tenancy of House.	Average Number of Family.	Members of Family Working.	Average Weekly Earnings of Family Working.	Average Weekly Earnings of each Household.	Respectable Tenants.	NATIVITY (TOTALS).			RELIGION (TOTALS).					
											English.	Irish.	Scotch.	Foreign.	R.C.	Protestant.	Jews.	None.	Church Attendants.
<i>Front Lands—</i>																			
1 Apartment,	682	9/9½	1,210·3	18/1½	3½ yrs.	3·2	10·8%	8/8	21/1	82·5%	14	249	417	2	286	395	—	1	82%
2 Apartments,	317	12/1	1,893	19/2	6 yrs.	4·3	22·4%	9/10	28/9	88·6%	6	133	177	1	160	157	—	—	86%
<i>Back Lands—</i>																			
1 Apartment,	2,638	8/4½	1,298	16/1	3 yrs.	3	12·3%	9/3½	19/7	76%	75	970	1,584	9	1,236	1,383	1	18	59·8%
2 Apartments,	1,871	11/11½	1,978	18/5½	{ 4 yrs. 4 mhs. }	4·2	18·7%	12/3½	28/	83·3%	42	787	1,023	19	967	886	9	9	74·8%

For the purpose of this enquiry 5,508 separate houses were visited—999 in front properties and 4,509 in back properties.

Taking the front lands first, it will be observed that 682 one-apartment dwellings and 317 two-apartment dwellings were visited. The average rentals of the former were found to be 9s. 9½d. per month for 1,210 cubic feet, which payment is made from an average household weekly earning of 21s. 1d. The corresponding figures for the two-apartment houses in front lands are 12s. 1d. for 1,893 feet, from 28s. 9d. per week.

For practically similar accommodation in back lands we find that for the single apartments there the average monthly rent is 8s. 4¼d., out of a household wage amounting to 19s. 7d. per week; and for two-apartment houses there, 11s. 11½d. per month, out of 28s. per week.

From these figures it appears the front-land tenant of the one-apartment house pays 10·5 per cent. of the household earnings in rent, and the two-apartment tenant 9·75 per cent. of it. The back-land tenant of the single-apartment house pays 9·85 per cent. of the total earnings in rent, and the two-apartment tenant there pays 9·51 per cent.

The status of the one class as against the other is only differentiated by 1s. 6d. per week in the case of the one-apartment households, and by 9d. a week in the case of the two-apartment households, while the respective rents they pay differ in favour of the back-land tenant of one apartment by 1s. 5¼d. per month, and in favour of the back-land tenant of the two-apartment dwelling by the small sum of 1½d. per month. Therefore, in respect of rentals and earnings, there is little or nothing to choose between them. Of course, it may be urged that, by paying 1s. 5¼d. a month less for the same cubic space, the tenant of the one-apartment house in the back land has a material advantage over his front-land neighbour, but the same cannot be argued for the two-apartment tenants in the two classes, as no one can, with show of reason, state that 1½d. per month compensates the back-land tenant for the difference of his situation.

Let us now examine the table for any other fact which will clearly show that the two classes of tenants are materially different. Column 10 has reference to the respectability of the tenants, which has been gauged by the inspectors, who know them and their habits so intimately. After visiting such houses for years one comes to ascertain, with a fair amount of correctness, the right of a tenant and his family to be certified "respectable." There are unhideable symptoms which disclose this—the appearance of the tenant and family, their bearing, the state of the house, the character of the furnishings in the house, and the undefinable something which tells the intelligent visitor whether the tenant is or is not a thriftless and dissolute person. Even here the figures do not exhibit any marked divergence. It is true the difference is in favour of the front-land tenants by from 5 to 6 per cent., but it is not sufficient to suggest that, by reason of the want of respectability, the inhabitants of our back lands are there and ought to be kept there. Neither is it to be found in nativity, nor in religious persuasion. Only in the matter of church or chapel attendance is there anything like marked difference in favour of the tenants of the front lands, and, of course, in this matter the word of the tenants themselves is all we have to go upon.

On the whole, then, we are driven to the conclusion that, as between the two, there is no well-marked line which divides them, either socially or from the point of view of economics.

As already stated, the 1s. 5½d. per month more paid by the tenants of the one-apartment houses in front lands is the most striking feature, but against that I have already shown in my lecture on "The Housing of the Labouring Classes" (1899), that the Corporation are now housing such tenants in front properties at 9s. 7d. per month for the use of 1,844 cubic feet, in place of 8s. 4½d. per month for 1,298 cubic feet in the back lands. Did the Corporation front-land single apartments contain only 1,298 cubic feet of air space, instead of 1,844 cubic feet, the rental would proportionately be about 6s. 9d. per month, in place of 8s. 4½d.

Upon this second ground, therefore, I am bound to say there is no argument whatever for the necessity of a continuance of back lands in our city.

Let us now examine the third argument, viz., that "*If the back lands were destroyed, there are no houses in the city of equal size and rents in which their inhabitants could reside.*"

This indeed is, in the words of Dryden, "a knockdown argument." Where are our backlanders to go when their present dismal blocks are demolished? We cannot do without them. Out of the 2,639 back-land families in single apartments which were visited for this enquiry, no less than 1,069 were those of unskilled labourers, or 40 per cent. of the whole. Of the 1,872 tenants of the two-apartment dwellings in back lands, 885 were unskilled labourers, or 47 per cent. These, our "hewers of wood and our drawers of water," have, like Childe Harold, only too good cause in many cases to cry—"Oh! that the desert were my dwelling-place." But in cities they must live, both for their own sakes and for the sake of our welfare in this great industrial community.

Glance over the Table No. II., which shows the callings of all the tenants that were called upon. Here we have as "backlanders," bakers, blacksmiths, butchers, cabmen, carters, dairy workers, domestic servants, engineers, firemen, hammermen, hawkers, joiners, lamplighters, laundresses, masons, pickle workers, plasterers, plumbers, postmen, printers, salesmen, scavengers, seamen, seamstresses, shoemakers, skilled labourers, slaters, tailors, toy makers, umbrella coverers, waiters, and others too numerous to mention, whose labour has the most intimate connection with the city's well-being as a whole, and whose services may be requisitioned by any one of our citizens from the highest to the lowest. I often wonder if the better classes in our city adequately realise the possible, nay, the probable, intimate connection, all unsuspected often, of the "backlander" baker, butcher, tailor, seamstress, waiter, with their own lives and social circle. I fear they too often listen irresolute, like Macbeth to

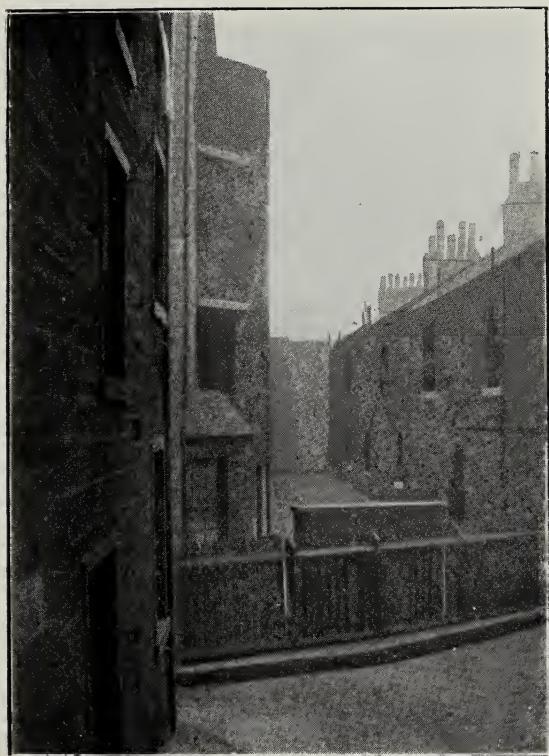


PHOTO. B.

This is a view of a back land, looking east.

It is about 21 feet from the four-storey land in front of it. In the ground-floor houses, in broad day, I could not read a newspaper article standing at the back of the apartment in front of the window, and the tenant said she could not sew except by the aid of a lamp.

TABLE II.—SHOWING OCCUPATION OF THE TENANTS OF 5,508 ONE AND TWO-APARTMENT TICKETED HOUSES IN GLASGOW.

OCCUPATION.	FRONT LANDS.		BACK LANDS.		OCCUPATION.	FRONT LANDS.		BACK LANDS.	
	One Apt.	Two Apts.	One Apt.	Two Apts.		One Apt.	Two Apts.	One Apts.	Two Apt.
Actor, - -	...	..	...	1	<i>Brot. forward,</i>	28	17	105	74
Bagsewer, - -	1	..	3	...	Car Conductor,	..	..	2	2
Baker, - -	6	3	23	6	Car Driver, -	...	...	1	1
Barber, - -	2	1	4	4	Carpet Weaver,	...	...	...	1
Basketmaker, -	...	...	1	...	Carter, - -	38	12	117	82
Beltmaker, - -	...	...	...	1	Cartwright, -	...	...	2	2
Bill Deliverer, -	...	...	1	...	Charwoman, -	34	11	226	70
Billposter, - -	...	...	1	3	Cigarette Maker,	...	1	1	...
Blacksmith, -	1	2	24	12	Clerk, - -	2	1	...	3
Boilermaker, -	9	5	8	8	Clothlapper, -	...	...	2	...
Boltmaker, - -	...	...	2	...	Coachbuilder, -	1	...	...	...
Bookbinder, -	...	1	4	1	Coalman, -	1	1	2	2
Bottle Labeller, -	...	1	...	...	Coal Merchant,	...	...	...	1
Boxmaker, - -	1	...	6	5	Confectioner, -	...	...	1	...
Brassfinisher, -	2	2	8	6	Cooper, - -	1	1	9	5
Bricklayer, - -	1	...	5	8	Coppersmith, -	2	...	3	1
Brickmaker, -	...	...	2	1	Dairy Worker,	...	...	2	...
Brushmaker, -	1	...	1	2	Domestic, -	21	16	139	92
Butcher, - -	...	...	1	1	Dressmaker, -	2	...	...	...
Cabinetmaker, -	3	...	4	6	Driller, - -	1	...	2	1
Cabman, - -	...	1	5	7	Drover, - -	...	...	...	1
Calenderer, -	1	1	...	...	Dyer, - -	...	...	2	3
Canal Boatman, -	...	...	2	1	Dyker, - -	...	...	3	1
Canvasser, - -	...	...	...	1	Electrician, -	1	...	...	...
<i>Carry forward,</i>	28	17	105	74	<i>Carry forward,</i>	132	60	619	342

OCCUPATION.	FRONT LANDS.		BACK LANDS.		OCCUPATION.	FRONT LANDS.		BACK LANDS.	
	One Apt.	Two Apts.	One Apt.	Two Apts.		One Apt.	Two Apts.	One Apt.	Two Apts.
<i>Brot. forward,</i>	132	60	619	342	<i>Brot. forward,</i>	496	221	1,867	1,370
Enameller, -	...	...	1	...	Lamplighter, -	1	3	10	8
Engineer, - -	7	5	16	12	Lather, - -	1	...	3	3
Engineman, -	1	...	2	5	Laundress, -	...	1	5	5
Farm Worker, -	...	...	3	...	Lodging-house Keeper, -	4	3	7	14
Fireman, - -	32	10	16	23	Machinist, -	5	...	22	5
Fishcurer, - -	...	...	6	...	Marble Worker,	...	...	...	2
Fish-hook Maker,	...	...	...	1	Mason, - -	1	...	25	14
Fitter, - -	1	...	3	6	Mattress Maker,	...	...	...	1
Gardener, - -	2	...	4	...	Miller, - -	1	...	...	1
Gilder, - -	...	...	2	1	Millworker, -	2	...	27	5
Glassblower, -	...	...	...	1	Millwright, -	...	...	...	1
Glazier, - -	...	...	3	1	Miner, - -	4	...	52	24
Gravedigger, -	...	...	...	1	Moulder, - -	8	4	38	44
Grinder, - -	...	...	1	1	Nailmaker, -	1	...	...	...
Grocer, - -	...	...	1	...	No occupation,	30	22	199	95
Hammerman, -	10	3	16	20	Nurse, - -	...	...	1	...
Hawker, - -	4	5	70	45	Packer, - -	...	...	1	1
Holder-on, - -	...	2	...	...	Painter, - -	4	2	19	15
Insurance Agent,	...	...	1	...	Paper Cutter, -	1	...	1	...
Interpreter, - -	...	1	...	...	Paper Maker, -	...	...	3	2
Ironturner, - -	...	1	2	...	Patternmaker, -	...	...	1	1
Ironworker, -	1	1	8	9	Photographer, -	...	...	2	...
Joiner, - -	3	1	24	17	Pickle Worker,	...	...	3	1
Labourer, - -	303	132	1,069	885	Pipemaker, -	...	1	3	3
<i>Carry forward,</i>	496	221	1,867	1,370	<i>Carry forward,</i>	559	257	2,289	1,615

OCCUPATION.	FRONT LANDS.		BACK LANDS.		OCCUPATION.	FRONT LANDS.		BACK LANDS.	
	One Apt.	Two Apts.	One Apt.	Two Apts.		One Apt.	Two Apts.	One Apt.	Two Apts.
<i>Brot. forward,</i>	559	257	2,289	1,615	<i>Brot. forward,</i>	590	277	2,389	1,686
Plasterer, - -	2	...	3	3	Ship Carpenter,	1	1	1	...
Plater, - -	1	...	...	...	Shirt Finisher,	1	...	1	...
Platelaye, -	...	...	...	1	Shoemaker, -	7	3	40	43
Plumber, - -	...	1	2	2	Showman, -	...	3	4	3
Pointsman, -	...	1	...	1	Skilled Labourer, -	40	17	105	64
Polisher, - -	...	1	1	1	Skindresser, -	...	...	2	1
Porter, - -	1	2	9	5	Slater, - -	1	1	7	10
Postman, - -	...	...	1	1	Soldier, - -	10	2	2	1
Pottery Worker, -	...	2	5	2	Soldier's Wife,	...	...	1	...
Poulterer, - -	...	...	...	1	Spindlemaker, -	...	1	...	...
Printer, - -	1	...	9	5	Stableman, -	1	...	2	2
Quarryman, -	...	...	1	...	Stair Railer, -	...	...	...	1
Rag-store Worker, -	...	...	3	7	Steeplejack, -	...	...	...	1
Ratecatcher, -	...	...	1	1	Stickbreaker, -	1	...	8	...
Rigger, - -	4	1	2	4	Steward, -	...	1	...	1
Rivetter, - -	6	6	9	8	Stonebreaker, -	...	...	1	1
Saddler, - -	...	...	2	...	Street Musician,	...	...	2	...
Sailmaker, - -	1	...	...	...	Surfaceman, -	...	...	2	3
Salesman, - -	1	1	11	5	Sweep, - -	...	1	1	...
Sawyer, - -	...	1	3	1	Tailor, - -	9	3	16	27
Scavenger, - -	...	...	4	3	Tailoress, -	1	...	...	...
Seaman, - -	2	...	17	10	Tallowmelter, -	...	...	1	...
Seamstress, -	11	4	16	10	Tilelayer, -	...	...	1	...
Shawl Fringer, -	1	...	1	...	Tinsmith, -	3	3	8	2
<i>Carry forward,</i>	590	277	2,389	1,686	<i>Carry forward,</i>	665	313	2,594	1,846

OCCUPATION.	FRONT LANDS.		BACK LANDS.		OCCUPATION.	FRONT LANDS.		BACK LANDS.	
	One Apt.	Two Apts.	One Apt.	Two Apts.		One Apt.	Two Apts.	One Apt.	Two Apts.
<i>Brot. forward,</i>	665	313	2,594	1,846	<i>Brot. forward,</i>	667	313	2,607	1,854
Toolmaker, -	...	...	1	...	Venetian Blind Maker, -	...	...	1	...
Toymaker, -	...	...	4	...	Waiter, -	1	...	3	...
Transferer, -	...	...	1	...	Warehouseman,	...	...	3	2
Traveller, -	...	...	...	2	Watchman, -	6	3	6	7
Trimmer, -	1	...	...	1	Weaver, -	7	1	13	7
Twister, -	...	...	2	1	Window Cleaner, -	...	...	1	1
Umbrella Coverer, -	1	...	4	2	Wireworker, -	...	...	3	...
Upholsterer, -	...	...	1	2	Woodturner, -	1	...	1	...
<i>Carry forward,</i>	667	313	2,607	1,854	TOTAL, -	682	317	2,638	1,871

the apparition of the bloody child, and croon to themselves—
 “Then live, back lands; what need I fear of thee?” In quiet and normal times, when pestilence is only heard of as stalking in distant lands, the public conscience is too apt to be soothed into this frame of mind. The apparition then seems to bid all “laugh to scorn the power of” slums! But in times like the present (1901), the apparition speaks in trumpet tones, “Beware! St. Mungo!” and then, like the changeful Macbeth, our better-class citizens bethink themselves like him, and cry out against slumland—

“But yet we’ll make assurance double sure,
 And take a bond of fate: thou shalt not live.”

This is always the sanitarian’s mental attitude towards the class of back lands I have been referring to—“Thou shalt not live.” Yet they do live, and live to hurt and destroy.

But the argument against the “death” of back lands is contained in the sad fact that there are no cheap sanitary houses to be had in front lands nor other lands within

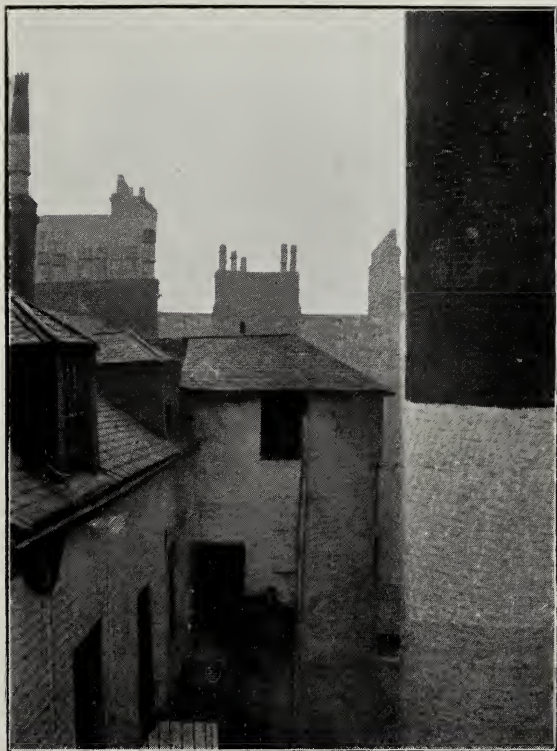


PHOTO. C.

This is a view, looking south, of a back land near the river. It is taken above the level of the eaves of the back property, and exhibits clearly how it has been built upon the area which naturally should be the back court of the property in front of it.



PHOTO. D.

This is the complement of Photo. C, looking north.

The back land is well shown on the right hand side. The death-rate of this area is one of the highest in the city, being 31 per 1,000 per annum.

Glasgow. If I put the houses vacant in the whole city under £6 of rental at 600 in all, I feel certain I overstate the supply.

Here, then, we have in a nutshell the slum landlord's best argument for being left alone. He is a public benefactor until the public build for the labouring classes, because he is keeping a roof over the heads of those who, apart from his back blocks, would have "no place wherein to lay their heads."

In this city it is not hundreds of good, substantial, cheap labourers' dwellings that we urgently need, but thousands of them, and until we have thousands of them, built by a powerful body or by the Corporation, and placed under caretakers, our city won't be right.

I have said that the slum landlord is, as things remain at present, a public benefactor. But this he is only in a negative way, and because he can't help it. His public benefaction runs parallel with his private interest. Unless he is compelled, he won't, as a rule, keep his property in thorough repair; he won't give his tenants water-closet accommodation or sinks and water supply in each house, except under official orders; and official orders in many cases are not forthcoming, because it is considered the said "orders" might bolster up his property against future attack. The landlord or factor who continues waiting for official orders, and consequently does nothing to put his back land into a good sanitary state so far as it can be put, apart from its "obstructive" situation, does not understand the meaning of the Act of Parliament I have alluded to in the first part of my lecture. But he ought to understand the meaning of the unwholesome and insanitary conditions under which his tenants have to live. I do not think it is necessary for me to go into nauseating details in order to exemplify, within the homes of the poor, the practical import of the want of "suitable and convenient water-closet accommodation," or the want of sink and water supply for each family. Each can imagine for himself what would happen in his house at times if these all-important adjuncts

to a clean family life were absent or difficult of access. You all may see the results I refer to by visiting the homes of the poor *at night*, or, if you cannot see it, *you can smell it*.

Before passing on to a consideration as to the houses which must replace insanitary back lands in Glasgow, I desire to say a word upon the state of many of the courts behind the humble tenements, and the dangers which arise therefrom. Too many of these are not only badly paved, but are not paved at all, the surface being of earth, or, at best, covered with ashes. Now, this is a condition of matters which, in the interests of cleansing and of public health, should not continue, whether there is a back land or no back land. An impervious surface is desirable behind such dwellings in a city under any circumstances, but it becomes absolutely necessary under our present ashpit system. Once or twice a week the foul contents are pitched out on to the surface, and in wet weather much of the organic matter is washed into the ashes or earth surface. It is impossible to doubt that myriads of disease germs of all kinds form a part of such material. Perhaps one of the most important is the bacillus of enteric fever; at any rate, we can take this disease as an example of what occurs in connection with others, such as tuberculosis and diarrhoea, two of our most deadly enemies. When enteric fever invades such a tenement, the infected parties probably go about for some time with the disease upon them before it becomes recognised. The dejecta are, of course, where water-closets don't exist, thrown into the ashpit, and from the ashpit, in due time, are cast out on to the pervious surface of the court. The most expert scavenger cannot pick up again all he throws down, and consequently the air becomes the carrier of the typhoid virus. Cases of infection from this disease have occurred from time to time, which cannot be traced in Glasgow to water or to milk, and, although the path of infection is in the great majority of cases through the digestive tract, it is recognised by the highest authorities that the lungs may occasionally represent the seat of invasion. But even assuming that the invasion

by the respiratory organs is rare, there still remains the contamination of the food, which in such dwellings is seldom far removed from the infected court surfaces. You will see, therefore, how important it is that all such courts should be asphalted or concreted, so that all offensiveness that may be left by the scavenger is, after his operation, immediately "hosed" off the surface into the drains. There is no doubt that sunlight and air destroy the typhoid bacilli as well as almost all others, but there remain the "resting spores" of the disease, which remain in a quiescent condition for a long time, and only await an opportunity to gain access to a body capable of being affected, and there develop into bacilli and begin anew their cycle of existence. We cannot await the advent of our new sanitary dwellings for the poor before reforming our back courts. It ought to be done now, and until it is done our poorer quarters will not be free from the probable invasion of disease, the rise and progress of which appear to the ordinary mind so mysterious.

And now as to the course of the future. The grimy inhabitants—the labourers, seamstresses, tailors, butchers, and bakers—who crowd in our back lands, what is to be done for them or with them? They cannot be turned out on to the streets! Insurrection lies that way, and the butchery and devil's work which comes of contact with the military. No! they must remain in their absolutely cheerless abodes until the day of their salvation comes. Some of us seem to think they ought to be able to work out their own salvation, and that dingy, airless, viewless surroundings should in no way prevent inner sweetness and scrupulous cleanliness. This myth is accepted as a truth by many well-meaning persons, who affect to see in the universal and strict, and even harsh, application of police law a remedy for the uncleanness of slumland. Gentlemen, I cannot accept the myth, because I am satisfied by long experience that it is a myth—false to the core. You do not look for grapes in a land where there is no sunshine, so you cannot look for cleanliness where there is defective light. Darkness and dirt are as mother and daughter in the dingy

back land, and no police regulations that were ever made, or soever put into execution, will bring sweetness out of, or put sweetness into, slums. Therefore, the cry of 50 per cent. of our poor, who, I believe, wish to be clean, goes up in what Carlyle calls "the huge inarticulate question—What do you mean to do with us?" Britain is ringing now with the question put in articulate form in the House of Lords but a short time ago, and the Government, through the voice of Lord Salisbury, answered—We cannot tell meantime, we are trying to grapple with the sphinx-riddle. And so, without State guidance or State aid, Local Authorities have to struggle on with the unsatisfactory Act of 1890 chained to their feet—struggle on through congestion, dirt, and epidemic disease, spending huge sums of money in the work of cure, which would have been much better spent in prevention.

It is difficult, without making an actual survey, to say what is immediately required in this city in the way of sanitary houses for the decent poor. I am quite safe, however, in stating that not less than 2,000 one and two-apartment houses should be erected with as little delay as possible upon light and airy situations and convenient to the city. These should be erected in blocks, on somewhat similar lines to those recently built by the Corporation at Haghill, where £14,425 was spent in providing 153 labourers' dwellings. This would involve a cost of £180,000 for building, and would accommodate, at our present standard of occupancy (400 cubic feet per adult), 12,974 persons over ten years of age. It would necessitate the purchase of 42,240 square yards or thereby of land, which, taking the average cost at 10s. per yard, would cause the expenditure of £21,120 more.

The total sum, therefore, in land at 10s. per yard, and the necessary buildings of four storeys in height, with ample yard space behind, would come out at about £201,120.

Were such a scheme put in hands and completed, say, within the next five years, a beginning could be made in earnest with the condemnation and destruction of insanitary back blocks, which at the present time is quite impracticable.

In no other way dare we attempt to relieve the present congestion. Glasgow will not, I trust, fall into the mistake of London, particularly in her Boundary Street Area Scheme, whereby 5,719 persons were to be displaced—2,000 immediately, and before any new accommodation was provided for them. The result was the scattering of this great number of low-class tenants to find such accommodation as they best could in the surrounding neighbourhood, and, as I am informed, in the overcrowding of the district.

This putting of the cart before the horse is always to be deprecated. It is easy to range within a half-mile radius of a scheme in any city, count the number of vacant houses within that circular mile, and state, "Yes, there are so and so vacant houses; go on with the demolition." That is not the question. If there be not a sufficiency of houses of the size and the rental demanded by those to be displaced within a reasonable distance, then the demolition should not be sanctioned until there is, or until, by the erection of new buildings, a sufficient number of suitable dwellings have been erected.

There are other lessons to be learned of the gravest importance from a survey of working-class buildings in the English Metropolis, where, I regret to say, land seems to be so expensive as to have caused back lands to be *recently built*, which cannot be considered to contain, in the lower flats, healthy dwellings for the people. One immense block I visited, containing five storeys and attics, stands only 36 feet behind a similar structure facing the street. In Glasgow I trust such a thing could not happen, notwithstanding the relaxation which is permissible under the Building Regulations Act in the case of blocks of dwellings for the working classes.

The houses in such blocks should be of a fair size. The cramping down of rooms, as we find can evidently be accomplished in London, to 13 feet by 11 feet by 8 feet 6 inches for the kitchen, and 13 feet by 8 feet by 8 feet 6 inches for the bedroom, or a total of 2,099 cubic feet in two-apartment

houses, should by no means be encouraged. I find that there such houses are let by the County Council at 5s. per week, or £13 per annum; whereas, in Glasgow, our Corporation give a two-apartment house of 3,500 cubic feet for £10 per annum, or 3s. 10d. per week.

Of course, we all must admit, I think, that the much maligned one-apartment house is, in all large cities, an absolute necessity, but it should contain not less than 1,600 cubic feet of free air-space, and should not be rented at more than is charged by our Improvement Trust for 1,800 cubic feet, viz., 2s. 2½d. per week, or £5 14s. 10d. per annum (water and stair gas included), which comes in at about one-tenth of the unskilled labourer's wage.

Compare this with the "Culham" single-apartment dwellings of the London County Council on the Boundary Street Area, with an air-space of about 1,324 cubic feet, and a rental of 3s. 6d. per week, or £9 2s. yearly. Unskilled labourers in London at these charges, and adopting our basis of his rent being at a tenth of his wage, would require to earn 35s. weekly. I do not know what he earns there, but I am certain it does not amount to the sum named, so that either he is not to be found at all in the Council's single apartments on that area, or he is paying more nearly one-sixth than one-tenth of his earnings in rent for his small apartment.

That is, I contend, not as it should be. So long as Glasgow can house her labourers, as she has shown she can do, in a roomy and sanitary house at or near a tenth of their average income, and leave a small surplus for sinking fund and reserve, she shall require no aid from the imperial exchequer, and, that being so, she shall not only feel independent of such aid, but will be in a position to oppose the appropriation of State funds to such a purpose in London or other populous centres, where either the land or other commodities are so inflated in value as to render there a solution of the housing problem insoluble without recourse to country situation and cheap workmen's trains.

Now, before closing my remarks, permit me to say a few

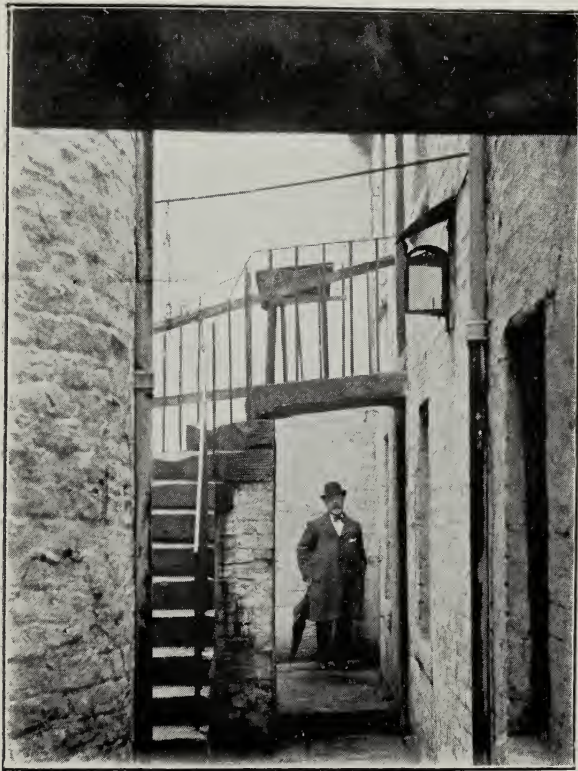


PHOTO. E.

The Inspector is shown here standing at the end of a narrow court between the back land and a second back land in the Cowcaddens district.

This is one of the worst samples of congestion in modern Glasgow.

words upon the important question of housing the poorer classes in country districts. The ostensible reason for this is, of course, to escape from the payment of dear land, and the consequent burden which dear land puts upon the rents payable by the poor. My experience among the poor drives me to the conclusion that they do not wish to be housed in the country, but in the city, near their work, and near the bustle and excitement of life. I feel bound to state this, however much I may sympathise with the common idea that the segregation of the poor is in their own interest and in the interest of the whole community.

By building a good, substantial, four-storey block of workmen's dwellings upon ground costing 30s. per square yard, demanding the payment of 3 per cent. on the capital expended; or upon ground costing 15s. per square yard, and demanding the payment of 6 per cent. on the capital expended, I find that the labourer does not pay more than 6d. per week for a two-apartment house containing 2,000 cubic feet, and 9d. per week for one containing 3,000 cubic feet. Now, what would he have to pay per week for railway carriage to and from his daily work? I find that under the Railways Acts of 1899 the South-Eastern and London, Chatham, and Dover Railway, and the Charing Cross, Euston, and Hampstead Line, charge 2d. for the return journey not exceeding four miles out and four miles back. This is admittedly very cheap travelling; yet, cheap as it is, it costs one individual 1s. per week, to say nothing of the travelling requirements of any others of the family. It is a common condition in a labourer's family that, at the least, one more of the family is working. Where this happens, 2s. per week would be required to meet travelling expenses, or a sum which would enable the labourer to sit upon city ground near his labour, in a house of 3,000 cubic feet, costing *£3 per square yard*, and still leave him 6d. per week in pocket, and this, be it remembered, on the assumption that he shall pay *nothing* for his ground in the country.

The land question, therefore, up to *£3* per square yard,

means nothing to the labouring man with a family, from an economic point of view, unless the State or the Municipality pays for his train. Then, and then only, will the poor, who are at present housed in the city, find it to be to their interest financially to sacrifice their longings for city residence and reside in suburban areas. Every shilling in their case has to be carefully counted, and until you can show them that it will be cheaper to go out, they will, I believe, remain in.

Whatever be the final outcome of the earnest consideration which the Government has promised to give to this grave and great question, it is difficult to conceive there will be any juggling with either the facts or the figures. It will not avail. Land to be redeemed from labourers' rents, and buildings built to be stable and sanitary for 100 years, to be redeemed in 40 or 50 years, will not do. These provisions may be considered satisfactory from the capitalists' point of view, or from the view of the Treasury, but we may rest assured the growing sense and intelligence of the nation on the "housing" problem will condemn the imposition of any burden on the poor which is not perfectly reasonable, and which tends rather to protect capital than to protect the struggling among our population in their securing a sanitary dwelling at the lowest possible cost consistent with economic safety.

I fear there is too much stress in these days laid upon the question as to how to secure that the housing of the poor may be made *to pay* the undertakers. Those who enter upon the solution of this problem with "making it pay" in their minds had better leave it alone. The poor cannot make it pay. They can only clear their feet, and return a bare 3 per cent. interest in money; but, under adequate conditions and proper care, they can pay in a higher and nobler sense, by becoming a sound, healthy, and happy integral part of an empire upon which the sun never sets.



PHOTO. F.

A corner in High Street. This property was recently acquired by the Improvement Trust, and will shortly be demolished.

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